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From COO to SVP  
- Leading  
Through  
Influence, Not  
Just Control

CASE STUDY

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## Case Study: From COO to SVP — Leading Through Influence, Not Just Control

**Client:** Lidia Cîrstei

**Company:** FintechOS, a high-growth leader in financial technology.

**Transition:** From Chief Operating Officer (COO) to Senior Vice President (SVP), Product & Operations.

**Service:** [The Connected Executive](#)

### The Challenge: When a Leader's Strengths Become Their Limitations

In the fast-paced world of a company like FintechOS, operational excellence is key. As COO, Lidia excelled. She was a results-oriented, "impulsive-aggressive-driver-leader" (360 feedback) who knew how to get things done and maintain control over complex processes.

However, her promotion to a dual role as SVP of **Product & Operations** created a new, more complex challenge. The "Product" side of the title required a completely different leadership style. It demanded less top-down control and more empathy, active listening, and the ability to facilitate discussions and empower creative teams.

The core problem was a classic leadership paradox: **How does a highly effective "driver" learn to become an influential "facilitator" without losing their edge for execution?** Lidia needed to evolve her leadership style to inspire innovation in her product teams while still ensuring operational rigor.

### The Solution: A Targeted Blueprint for Behavioral Evolution

Through [The Connected Executive](#) program, we created a practical roadmap focused on tangible behavioral shifts. We didn't try to change who Lidia was; we worked to expand her leadership toolkit.

Based on confidential feedback from her 13 stakeholders involved in the program and our initial diagnostics, we targeted three critical areas for development:

1. **Delegate and Prioritize:** Move from owning every important task to empowering her team. A key first step was creating a shared operational dashboard to give her visibility without needing to be involved in every detail.
2. **Develop Interpersonal Influence:** Consciously shift from being the "driver" of every conversation to a "facilitator" who actively and patiently listens, making others feel heard and valued.
3. **Manage the Drive for Control:** Evolve from the instinct to control everything to a place of trust, focusing her energy only on the most critical strategic priorities and giving her teams the autonomy to deliver.

## **The Transformation: Measured Change, Not Just Good Intentions**

This was a journey of conscious practice. Over 6 months, Lidia worked on these new behaviors while her team provided regular, anonymous feedback through our measurement platform.

The data showed a clear and positive trend. Her team's perception of her leadership style began to shift. They noted that she was listening more actively, was more receptive to their ideas, and was delegating more effectively.

She was successfully navigating the transition from being the person who had all the answers to being the leader who could draw the best answers from her team—a critical skill for anyone leading both product and operations.

## **The Result: A More Versatile and Influential Leader**

By embracing this journey, Lidia transformed her leadership approach to meet the dual demands of her new role. She learned to balance her innate drive for results with a more empathetic, facilitative style that unlocked greater potential in her teams.

This evolution allows her to effectively lead the operational engine of the business while simultaneously creating the psychological safety and empowerment necessary for a world-class product organization to innovate and thrive.

In her own words:

*"I have worked with George for a full year, during what I can call my most difficult moment so far, both on a personal and professional level. Under his guidance I have grown into what I am today - much more aware of my value, my strengths and my weaknesses but most importantly on the impact I can have on others. George helped me go beyond understanding the importance of collaboration and communication but also make it work at best for me and the others.*

*We always achieve great things when we have the courage to step outside the comfort zone, and this is what George encouraged and facilitated for me - stepping out of my comfort zone and evolving as an individual and as a professional.*

*Thank you George for the amazing experience, for your absolute professionalism, empathy and patience!"*

## **About George Bragadireanu | Executive Coach**

George Bragadireanu specializes in coaching successful leaders through their most critical career transitions. His proven process helps executives step back from the daily operational

demands to embrace a more strategic perspective. With over a decade of experience, George has guided numerous leaders to achieve transformative growth, renewed purpose, and measurable results.

**[The Connected Executive](#)** is a structured program designed to provide the clarity and support needed to succeed in a new, demanding role.

**Schedule an exploratory call to discuss your unique leadership challenge.**

**[bragadireanu.com](http://bragadireanu.com)**